

Monument and in today's monument proclamations. The United States will exercise the same rights and freedoms in similarly protected areas and waters of foreign nations. In addition, the United States, through its executive agencies, shall provide for the readiness, training, and global mobility of U.S. Armed Forces in its establishment of marine conservation areas.

Management of Submerged Lands

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is the only United States territory that does not have title to the submerged lands beneath that portion of the United States territorial sea that is within 3 miles of the coastlines of the CNMI. It is appropriate that the CNMI be given the same authority as the other territories. In 2005, my administration supported legislation that would have provided the CNMI with such ownership, consistent with what was granted to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa in October 1974.

My administration also recognizes, as was recognized in 1974, the need to reserve Federal title in certain submerged lands, including submerged lands for use by our Nation's military, which is moving forces

to the area from Okinawa, Japan. It is in the interest of the security of our Nation to reserve the necessary areas for national defense, while also ensuring the people of the CNMI have the benefit and enjoyment of the rights coming with ownership of submerged lands out to 3 miles.

To this end, I have asked the Secretary of the Interior to submit legislation that, subject to valid existing rights, transfers to the CNMI the existing rights and title of the Federal Government over submerged lands within 3 miles of the coast of the CNMI, consistent with that provided to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, and I urge the Congress to promptly pass such legislation.

I have also directed the Department of the Interior to develop legislation and procedures for the management and administration of recovery of mineral resources in areas of the Pacific, outside the monument, that are not currently covered by existing offshore mineral resource law, including authority and procedures for obtaining royalties and assessing fees and for revenue sharing, as appropriate.

NOTE: The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks During a Meeting With Former Presidents and the President-Elect

January 7, 2009

I want to thank the President-elect for joining the ex-Presidents for lunch. I am—one message that I have, and I think we all share, is that we want you to succeed. Whether we're a Democrat or Republican, we care deeply about this country. And to the extent we can, we look forward to sharing our experiences with you. All of us who have served in this office itself understand that the office transcends the individual.

And we wish you all the very best, and so does the country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and William J. Clinton; and President-elect Barack Obama. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President-elect Obama. The Office

of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the Points of Light Institute January 7, 2009

Thank you all. Mr. President—[*laughter*]
—yes? No—[*laughter*]. Thank you all
for coming. I'm told there is seven speak-
ers. So there's now about to be six. I thank
you for—I welcome you to the White
House. I hope you take advantage of the
reception that we have after these seven
short speeches. And I want to thank you
for your compassion.

The strength of America is not our mili-
tary, it's not our wallet, it is—lies in the
hearts and souls of our citizens, those who
hear the universal call to love a neighbor
just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

And so for those of you who are rallying
the armies of compassion, and encouraging
the armies of compassion, we thank you.

And now it is my honor to introduce
my brother Neil M. Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. in
the East Room at the White House. In his
remarks, he referred to former President
George H.W. Bush. The transcript released
by the Office of the Press Secretary also in-
cluded the remarks of former President
Bush.

Remarks on the No Child Left Behind Act in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania January 8, 2009

The President. Thank you for the warm
welcome. And Laura and I are thrilled to
be here at Kearny School. We have come
because this is one of the really fine schools
in the city of Philadelphia. We bring greet-
ings from the Nation's Capital, but more
importantly, we bring appreciation for those
who are working so hard to make sure that
every child can learn.

You know, 7 years ago today, I had the
honor of signing a bill that forever changed
America's school systems. It was called the
No Child Left Behind Act. I firmly believe
that thanks to this law, more students are
learning, an achievement gap is closing.
And on this anniversary, I have come to
talk about why we need to keep the law
strong. If you find a piece of legislation
that is working, it is important to make

sure the underpinnings of that law remain
strong.

I do want to thank Laura for joining
me. She has been an awesome wife and
a great First Lady. Our journey together
in Washington has been fantastic, and I
thank her very much for her love.

I am proud to be here with Arlene Ack-
erman. Thank you for your introduction,
Arlene, and thank you for being—[*ap-
plause*]. Arlene is a reform-minded leader.
And by that, I mean you have a super-
intendent here who is willing to challenge
the status quo if the status quo is unaccept-
able. Sometimes that's hard in public life.
You see the status quo, and people are
saying, "Oh, let's just leave it the way it
is, it's too hard to change." And you have
a superintendent here that says, "If we're
finding failure, we're going to change." And